Volunteering and improved health

Among a number of studies reporting on the benefit of volunteering and mentoring upon the health of those involved as volunteers, Black and Living (2004) reported that volunteering appears to exert its effects predominantly upon mental health. Engaging in a volunteer role may help to promote psychological well-being through providing opportunities to enhance positive effect and to gain experience and skills, helping to build confidence and self esteem. Volunteering also provided contact with other people and social support as well as opportunities for spiritual reflection and self-reflection upon purpose and meaning of life. It encouraged volunteers to feel part of community life and provide a replacement role or an additional role. These findings are supported by Garcia, Metha, Perfect and McWhirter (1997) who also reported significant improvement to the mental health of volunteer counsellors quoting the experience of learning and the trust and support of a group as well as increased self confidence and self efficacy.

Further details in
